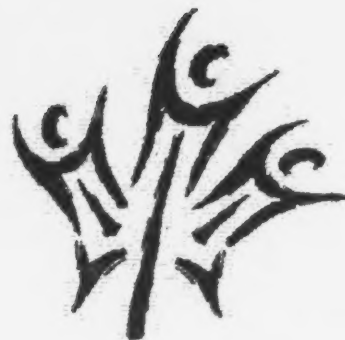


Article

Volunteering in Canada

by Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton



April 16, 2012



Statistics
Canada

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Standard symbols for Statistics Canada

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- P preliminary
- r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

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by Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton

Introduction

In 2010, about one-half of Canadians contributed their time, energy and skills to groups and organizations such as charities and non-profits. They provided leadership on boards and committees; canvassed for funds; provided advice, counselling or mentoring; visited seniors; prepared and delivered food; served as volunteer drivers; advocated for social causes; coached children and youth. In short, they shaped their communities and enabled non-profit organizations to deliver programs and services to millions of their fellow Canadians.

This volunteer work is important not only to individual volunteers but to Canadian society as a whole. For example, according to the 2011 United Nations State of the World's Volunteerism Report, "...volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation."¹

This article presents information about the volunteer activities of Canadians during the 12-month period preceding the 2010 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP). It discusses the rates of volunteering, the number of hours dedicated by Canadians and the types of organizations they support. It describes the key socioeconomic characteristics of volunteers in general, and then takes

a brief look at the "top volunteers" who contribute hundreds of hours to charitable organizations. Next, the article examines the types of volunteer activities Canadians engage in, how they become involved, their motivations for volunteering, and the barriers preventing them from doing more volunteering. The article concludes by looking at the informal volunteering that goes on every day when Canadians help their family, friends and neighbours directly.

For more information on the data and for definitions of the different concepts used in this article, see "What you should know about this study."

Number of volunteers growing faster than Canada's population

Over 13.3 million people—accounting for 47% of Canadians aged 15 and over—did volunteer work in 2010. They devoted almost 2.07 billion hours to their volunteer activities: a volume of work that is equivalent to just under 1.1 million full-time jobs (Table 1).

The number of volunteers in 2010 was significantly greater than in earlier years. The 13.3 million people who volunteered marked an increase of 6.4 % over 2007 and of 12.5% over 2004. In comparison, the rate of growth recorded for the general population aged 15 and over was 8.4% between 2004 and 2010.

While the increase in the number of volunteers continued the upward

trend observed since 2004, the number of hours dedicated to volunteer work plateaued. After rising about 4% between 2004 and 2007, the total number of volunteer hours logged in 2010 remained essentially unchanged from 2007, at just under 2.07 billion.

Many Canadians become involved in volunteering because people they know are doing it. In 2010, 43% of volunteers said they did their volunteer work as part of a group project with friends, neighbours or co-workers; another 25% said they had joined members of their immediate family in their volunteer work. These proportions are essentially the same as those recorded in 2007 and 2004.

With the increasing use of the Internet for multiple purposes, one would expect to see more online volunteer activity than in previous survey years. In 2010, 14% of volunteers said they had sought out volunteering opportunities through the Internet, up from 10% in 2007 and 8% in 2004. And one-quarter of volunteers (25%) used the Internet to conduct activities on behalf of non-profit and charitable organizations, compared with 23% in 2007 and 20% in 2004. The Internet may prove a more valuable source of recruitment than these figures suggest—Canadian researchers have found that moderate Internet users recorded higher volunteer rates and more volunteer hours than non-users, even after

What you should know about this study

This study is based on data from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP), which was conducted on a sample of persons aged 15 and over, totalling 15,482 respondents in 2010 and 21,827 respondents in 2007.

Definitions

Volunteers

Persons aged 15 and over who did any activities without pay on behalf of a group or organization, at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This includes any unpaid help provided to schools, religious organizations, sports or community associations.

Top volunteers

Top volunteers are defined as the 25% of volunteers who contributed the most hours. In 2010, these people volunteered 161 hours or more in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Average annual volunteer hours

This is the average number of hours volunteers gave of their time on behalf of a group or organization in the 12 months preceding the survey. It is not the average over the entire population.

Helping others directly/informal volunteering

This refers to helping people on one's own, that is, not through a group or organization, in the 12 months preceding the survey. It includes help given to friends, neighbours and relatives, but excludes help given to a person living in one's household.

Table 1 Volunteer rate and volunteer hours, population aged 15 and over, 2004, 2007 and 2010

	2010	2007	2004
Volunteer rate			
Total population (thousands)	28,285	27,069‡	26,093‡
Number of volunteers (thousands)	13,282	12,478‡	11,809‡
Volunteer rate (percentage)	47	46	45‡
Volunteer hours			
Total annual volunteer hours (millions)	2,068	2,067	1,983
Full-time year-round job equivalents ¹ (jobs)	1,077,083	1,076,673	1,033,019
Average annual volunteer hours (hours)	156	166	168‡
Median annual volunteer hours (hours)	55	56	61

‡ statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from 2010

1. Assuming 40 hours of work per week for 48 weeks.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007 and 2010.

controlling for sociodemographic characteristics such as age, sex, education and presence of children.²

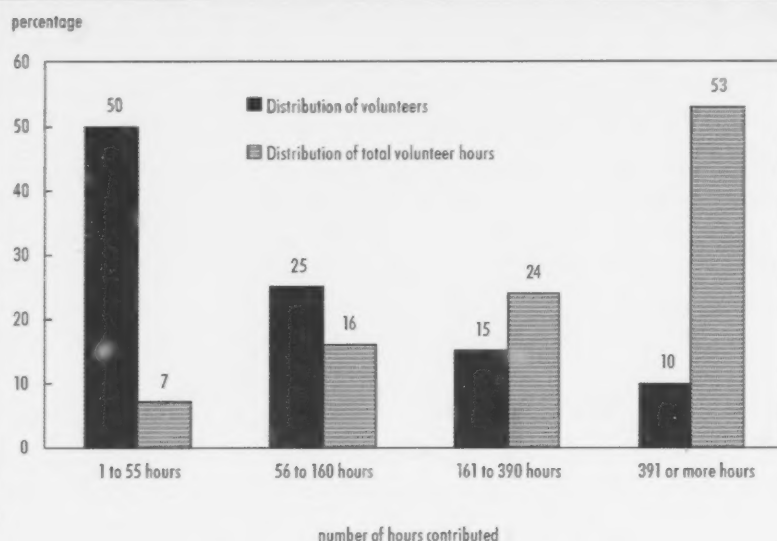
Most of the work done by few volunteers

A small proportion of volunteers do most of the work (Chart 1). In fact in 2010, 10% of volunteers accounted

for 53% of all volunteer hours given to non-profit and charitable organizations. They dedicated more than 390 hours to their volunteer activities, the equivalent of at least 10 weeks in a full-time job.³

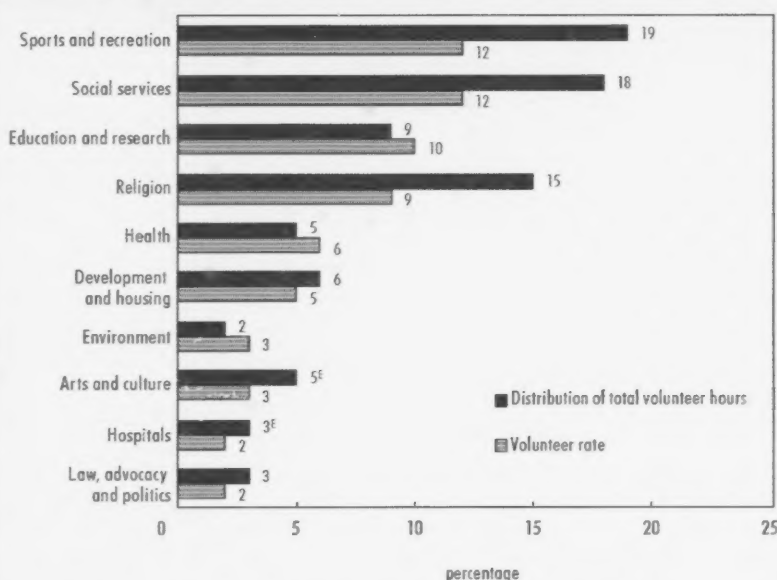
Another 15% of volunteers logged between 161 and 390 hours, corresponding to between 4 and almost 10 full-time weeks of unpaid work; they contributed 24% of the total hours devoted to volunteer work in 2010.

Chart 1 Distribution of volunteers and of total volunteer hours, by number of hours contributed, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Chart 2 Volunteer rate and distribution of total volunteer hours, by selected organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Sports and recreation and social services sectors get the most support

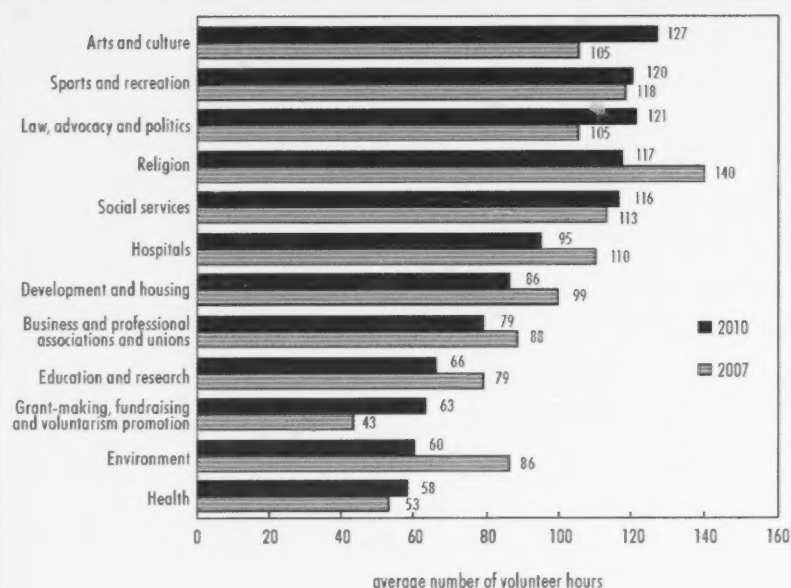
Non-profit and charitable organizations support an enormous variety of causes, ranging from universal issues like heart disease or homelessness to specific questions mainly relevant to the local community. But some subjects attract more volunteers than others. In 2010, 12 % of people aged 15 and over did volunteer work for sports and recreation organizations and 12% for non-profit organizations providing social services; 10% devoted their time and energy to associations engaged in education and research, another 9% to religious organizations, and 6% to those supporting health issues (Chart 2).

About 66% of volunteer hours went to the non-profit and charitable organizations working in these five areas (Chart 2). Organizations associated with sports and recreation accounted for 19% of volunteer hours, those providing social services for 18% and religious organizations for 15%. Non-profits involved in education and research received 9% of volunteer hours and health organizations received 5%.

When examining the average number of hours people donated to organizations in each category, a slightly different result presents itself. Volunteers dedicated more than 100 hours, on average, to sports and recreation (120 hours), religion (117 hours) and social services (116 hours). But they gave only about half as many hours to education and research associations (66 hours) and to health-related organizations (58 hours) (Chart 3). Between 2007 and 2010, there were no statistically significant changes in the average number of volunteer hours reported for the various types of organizations.

Most volunteers devoted their energies to only one or two non-profit or charitable associations. One-half of volunteers (50%) had worked for one organization, 28% for two, and the remaining 22% for more

Chart 3 Average volunteer hours, by selected organization type, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

than two. However, volunteers did not divide their time equally among multiple organizations: in 2010, 76% of volunteers' hours were given to their main organization (that is, the organization for which they reported the most hours). This proportion was essentially the same as that reported in 2007 and in 2004.

Likelihood of volunteering depends partly on life stage

In 2010, almost 1 in 2 Canadians (47%) volunteered their time, energy and skills to non-profit and charitable organizations. But a person's probability of volunteering changes considerably across their life course, because their interests and obligations as a teenager are quite different from those they have later in life as a working parent and as a retired empty-nester. These different life stages affect the decision to volunteer in different ways.⁴ Differences between age groups

may also reflect, to some extent, generational or cohort differences.

Although volunteers' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are discussed separately below, many are related to each other and interact in predictable ways; for example, income increases with education and marital status changes with age.

Age

In general, younger Canadians are more likely to volunteer than older Canadians. Well over one-half of people aged 15 to 24 (58%) and 35 to 44 (54%), and close to one-half of those aged 25 to 34 (46%), reported doing volunteer work in 2010. In comparison, pre-retirees aged 55 to 64 had a volunteer rate of 41% in 2010 and seniors recorded a rate of 36% (Table 2). Adults aged 25 to 34 were the only age group to record an increase in volunteerism between 2007 and 2010.

While younger Canadians are more likely to volunteer, they devote fewer hours to their volunteer work. On average, youths aged 15 to 24 (130 hours) and younger adults aged 25 to 34 (109 hours) recorded only about one-half as many hours as seniors (223 hours). Average volunteer hours in 2010 remained unchanged for each age group compared to 2007.

At first glance, the inverse relationship between volunteer rates and average volunteer hours for young people and for seniors may seem contradictory. However, the youth volunteer rate may be influenced by the requirement in some school districts to perform community service in order to graduate from high school; since many teens already lead busy lives, it is easy to see why their rates may be high while their average hours are low.⁵ In contrast, seniors' lower rate is partly due to the large number of people in this age group who do not volunteer due to illness or poor health,⁶ although seniors who are healthy devote a lot of time to volunteering.

Marital status

Single Canadians who had never been married were the most likely to have done volunteer work in 2010, at 51%, compared to 47% of people in married or common-law couples. Widows and widowers were least likely to have volunteered (32%), reflecting the fact that they are mainly an older population. However, single volunteers devoted less time than volunteers in couples, at 134 hours versus 160 hours on average (Table 2).

Education

Previous research has consistently found that education plays a highly significant role in volunteering.⁷ The 2010 CSGVP data confirm that people with a university education are much more likely to volunteer than those with less education. In 2010, 58% of adults with a university degree reported doing volunteer work, compared with 37% of

Table 2 Volunteer rate, average and median annual volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2004, 2007 and 2010

	Volunteer rate			Average annual volunteer hours ¹			Median annual volunteer hours ¹		
	2010	2007	2004	2010	2007	2004	2010	2007	2004
	percentage			hours					
Total	47	46	45†	156	166	168	55	56	61
Age group									
15 to 24 years †	58	58	55	130	138	139	50	41	50
25 to 34 years	46*	40*†	42*†	109	133	137†	35	45†	50
35 to 44 years	54	52*	51*†	136	158	152	50	52	60
45 to 54 years	45*	48*	47*	167*	170*	177*	60	66	71
55 to 64 years	41*	40*	42*	201*	205*	202*	80	75	80
65 years and over	36*	36*	32*†	223*	218*	245*	100	100	119
65 to 74 years	40*	40*	39*	235*	216*	250*	100	100	120
75 years and over	31*	29*	23*†	198*	222*	234*	87	100	102
Sex									
Men †	46	45	44	153	168	168	52	59	60
Women	48	47	47*	158	164	168	60	55	64
Marital status									
Married or common law †	47	47	46	160	168	172	60	60	67
Single, never married	51*	48	48	134*	153	148*	50	47	51
Separated or divorced	42*	39*	43*	183	196	199	64	62	65
Widow or widower	32*	31*	28*	204	179	201	80	86	104
Level of education									
Less than high school diploma †	37	39	37	147	136	140	46	40	48
Graduated from high school	43*	42	42*	158	159	161	52	60	62
Some postsecondary	54*	50*	50*	190	138	166	50	53	66
Postsecondary diploma or certificate	45*	47*	47*	140	168*†	172*†	50	57	61
University degree	58*	57*	59*	160	187*†	180*†	70	75	72
Labour force status									
Employed †	50	50	50	139	150	152	50	52	60
Unemployed	34*	38*	42*	132	205	235*†	75	98†	F
Not in the labour force	44*	44*	43*	189*	190*	199*	60	60	75
Household income									
Less than \$20,000 †	33	31	30	161	200	177	50	52	59
\$20,000 to \$39,999	36	36*	37*	186	183	175	60	58	66
\$40,000 to \$59,999	42*	44*	45*	164	153*	184	55	55	64
\$60,000 to \$79,999	51*	47*	48*	161	173	168	54	60	60
\$80,000 to \$99,999	51*	52*	51*	142	161*	151	60	56	60
\$100,000 and over	57*	60*†	60*	143	155*	155	53	56	62
\$100,000 to \$119,999	54*	56*	58*	157	156	153	60	55	64
\$120,000 and over	58*	62*	61*	136*	154*	157	50	56	62

Table 2 Volunteer rate, average and median annual volunteer hours, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2004, 2007 and 2010 (continued)

	Volunteer rate			Average annual volunteer hours ¹			Median annual volunteer hours ¹		
	2010	2007	2004	2010	2007	2004	2010	2007	2004
	percentage			hours					
Presence of children in household²									
No children in household †	41	39†	40	175	184	191	62	64	70
Pre-school aged children only	45	41	43	87*	110*	125*†	27	35 [‡]	40
Both pre-school and school-aged children	56*	54*	53*	122*	147*	141*	44	54 [‡]	50
School-aged children only	59*	62*	59*	146*	153*	142*	55	52	60

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from reference group

‡ statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from 2010

1. Estimates of average and median volunteer hours are calculated for volunteers only.

2. "Pre-school aged" is defined as ages 0 to 5, while "school-aged" is defined as ages 6 to 17. "Both pre-school and school-aged children" indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007 and 2010.

those without a high school diploma and 43% of high school graduates. These volunteer rates were effectively the same as those observed in 2007. However, the average number of hours dedicated to volunteer work stabilized or declined over the period: for high school graduates, average hours remained steady, while for both volunteers with university degrees and those with college diplomas, average hours fell by almost 30 hours.

Income

Education and income are strongly related, so it is no surprise that the volunteer rate rises as household income increases. For instance, 33% of those with household incomes under \$20,000 did some volunteer activity in 2010; this percentage rose with each income level to reach 58% for people with incomes of \$120,000 or more. On the other hand, lower-income volunteers did an average of 161 hours of volunteer work in 2010, 18% more than the highest income volunteers (136 hours). All these figures were unchanged from 2007 (Table 2).

Labour force status

Employed Canadians have higher rates of volunteering. In 2010, 50% of employed Canadians did some volunteering, compared with 34% of the unemployed and 44% of people who were not in the labour force (this group includes retirees, stay-at-home parents and most students). This finding is partly related to age, since the majority of workers are in the age range in which about 1 in 2 Canadians are volunteers (25 to 54 years). However, the time demands of their jobs may explain why employed volunteers recorded significantly fewer volunteer hours than those not in the labour force, at 139 hours versus 189 hours. These rates of volunteering and average hours of volunteer work showed no substantive change from 2007.

Having school-aged children in the household

Another factor that considerably increased the likelihood a person did volunteer work was having school-aged children (6 to 17 years) in the household. Many school-

aged children draw their parents into volunteer work because they participate in school and after-school activities that probably would not exist without parental involvement.⁸ The CSGVP confirms that parents who have school-aged children at home (59%), or who have both older and younger children (56%), had significantly higher rates of volunteering than people without any children at home (41%). On the other hand, volunteers without children at home devoted about 30 more hours to their volunteer activities (175 hours) than parents with school-aged children in the household (146 hours). An increase in the volunteer rate for Canadians without children at home (from 39% to 41%) was the only significant change to occur between 2007 and 2010 (Table 2).

In summary, rates of volunteerism remained fairly stable across the various population characteristics from 2007 to 2010. Similarly, the average number of hours volunteers devoted to their work did not change much, regardless of their demographic

and socio-economic characteristics. However, a fairly consistent pattern of voluntary behaviour can be observed: within the groups having higher rates of volunteering, people generally dedicate fewer hours to their volunteer activities.

Top volunteers more likely to be university graduates or actively religious

Top volunteers are the people on whom charitable and non-profit organizations rely most heavily. They are the people who are deeply committed and who dedicate the

greatest number of hours to their volunteer work. Top volunteers are the 25% of volunteers (and the 12% of Canadians) who spent 161 hours or more on volunteer activities during the twelve months preceding the 2010 survey. Put differently, this amount of volunteer hours is the equivalent of at least four weeks of full-time work (based on a 40-hour week). All told, top volunteers accounted for 77% of the volunteer hours contributed in 2010, compared to 78% in 2007.

According to the 2010 CSGVP, university graduates were more likely

to be top volunteers than people with less than high school (16% versus 8%) (Table 3). People with only school-aged children at home were about twice as likely to be top volunteers as people whose children were all under the age of six (13% versus 7%).

Most notable, however, is the relationship with religiosity. In 2010, 21% of people who went to religious services once a week were top volunteers, compared with 10% of people who attended less frequently (including adults who did not attend at all).

Table 3 Percentage of people who are top volunteers,¹ by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2010

	People who are top volunteers		People who are top volunteers
	percentage		percentage
Age group		Labour force status	
15 to 24 years †	12	Employed †	12
25 to 34 years	9*	Unemployed	5 ^{†*}
35 to 44 years	12	Not in the labour force	13
45 to 54 years	12	Household income	
55 to 64 years	12	Less than \$20,000 †	8
65 years and over	13	\$20,000 to \$39,999	10
65 to 74 years	15	\$40,000 to \$59,999	10
75 years and over	10	\$60,000 to \$79,999	13*
Sex		\$80,000 to \$99,999	13*
Men †	11	\$100,000 and over	14*
Women	12	\$100,000 to \$119,999	15*
Marital status		\$120,000 and over	13*
Married or common law †	12	Presence of children in household²	
Single, never married	11	No children in household †	12
Separated or divorced	11	Pre-school aged children only	7*
Widow or widower	10	Both pre-school and school-aged children	12
Level of education		School-aged children only	13
Less than high school diploma †	8	Religious attendance	
Graduated from high school	11*	Attends services weekly †	21
Some postsecondary	14*	Does not attend services weekly	10*
Postsecondary diploma or certificate	11*		
University degree	16*		

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from reference group

1. Top volunteers are defined as the 25% of volunteers who contributed the most hours (161 hours or more).

2. "Pre-school aged" is defined as ages 0 to 5, while "school-aged" is defined as ages 6 to 17. "Both pre-school and school-aged children" indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

In addition to their hundreds of volunteer hours, top volunteers are often heavily involved in charitable giving, social participation and providing direct help to others. This has led some researchers to suggest that they possess a set of values or beliefs that encourage contributing to the common good.⁹ But an individual's personality and temperament also play a role: researchers have identified some key traits that are associated with high levels of volunteer commitment, including "agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability" and being an extroverted personality.¹⁰

Volunteering is connected to early life experiences

A previous Canadian study has shown that people who were involved in community activities in their childhood or adolescence have a greater tendency to become adults who are involved in more kinds of civic activities like formal and informal volunteering, political organizations, service clubs, community associations, and so on.¹¹

The 2010 CSGVP asked if respondents had experienced various types of community involvement while in primary or secondary school. Results confirm that people are much more likely to be volunteers after they leave school when they have had this kind of early life experience:

- being active in student government (64% volunteered in 2010, compared with 44% of those who had not been active);
- one or both parents doing volunteer work in the community (58% versus 38%);
- being active in a religious organization (57% versus 43%);
- doing some kind of volunteer work (56% versus 38%);
- seeing someone they admired helping others (54% versus 39%);
- going door-to-door to raise money for a cause or organization (55% versus 41%);

- belonging to a youth group, such as Guides, Scouts, 4-H club, or choir (54% versus 40%);
- participating in an organized team sport (53% volunteered in 2010 compared to 40% of those who had not played in a team sport).

Almost two-thirds of religiously active Canadians do volunteer work

It is a basic axiom of research in the non-profit sector that more religious people exhibit higher rates of giving, participating and volunteering; studies also show there are significant relationships between religiosity, personality type and volunteerism.¹² According to the CSGVP, almost two-thirds of Canadians aged 15 and over who attended religious services at least once a week (65%) did volunteer work, compared with less than one-half (44%) of people who were not frequent attendees (this includes people who did not attend at all) (Chart 4).

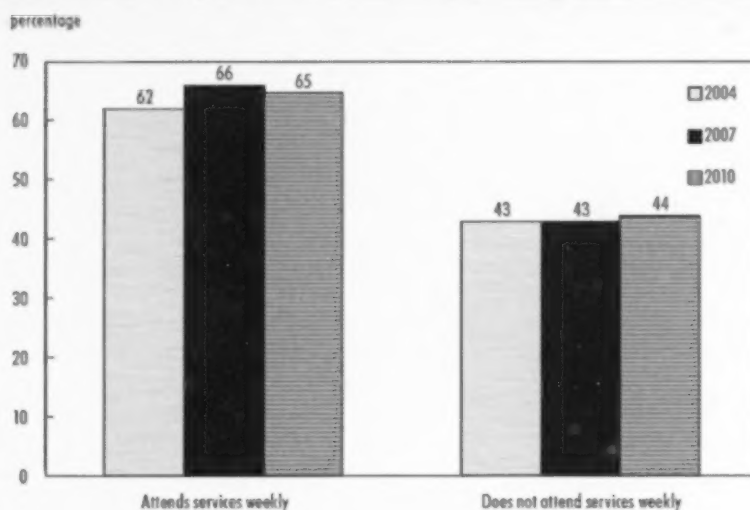
Contrary to the pattern seen earlier (higher volunteer rates are related to lower volunteer hours), volunteers

who are weekly religious attendees dedicated about 40% more hours than other volunteers: on average, they gave 202 hours in 2010, compared with 141 hours for other volunteers (Chart 5). A recent study found that extroverted churchgoers were more likely to volunteer, and also more likely to volunteer to do more things, which may help to explain this inversion of the regular pattern.¹³ Not surprisingly, frequent attendees of religious services contributed many more of their volunteer hours to religious organizations than did less frequent attendees (42% versus 4%), but they provided the majority of their hours to non-religious organizations. These figures remained quite similar since 2004.

Volunteer rate highest in Saskatchewan

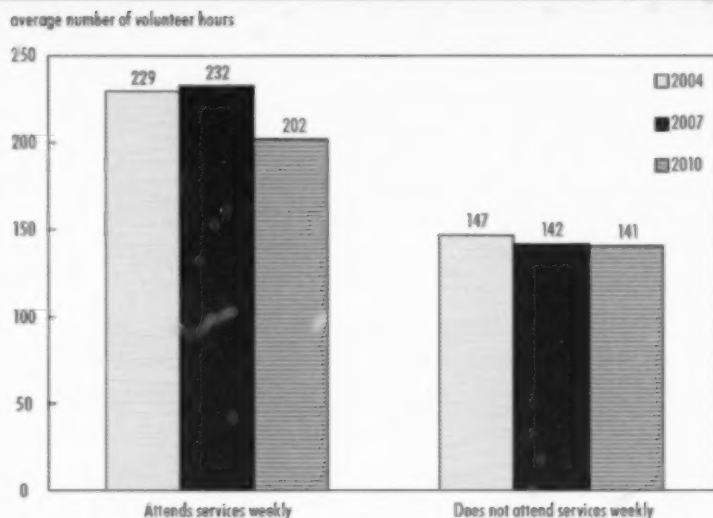
Rates of volunteerism vary considerably by province and territory. The highest rate was recorded in Saskatchewan, where 58% of adults aged 15 and over did volunteer work in 2010 (Chart 6). Volunteer rates were also higher

Chart 4 Volunteer rate by religious attendance, population aged 15 and over, 2004, 2007 and 2010



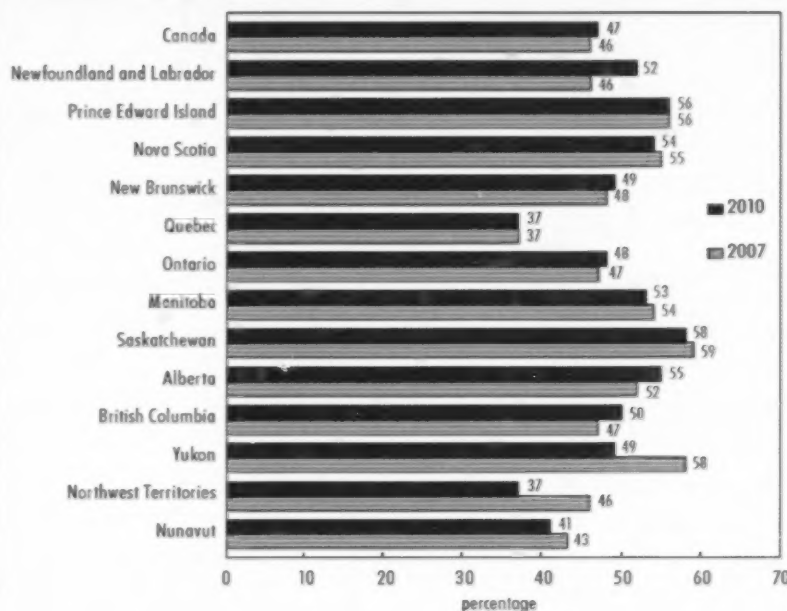
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007 and 2010.

Chart 5 Average volunteer hours by religious attendance, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2004, 2007 and 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007 and 2010.

Chart 6 Volunteer rate by province or territory, population aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

than the Canadian average in Prince Edward Island (56%), Alberta (55%) and Nova Scotia (54%). The lowest rates were observed in the Northwest Territories (37%), Quebec (37%) and Nunavut (41%). Rates of volunteering changed significantly between 2007 and 2010 in Newfoundland and Labrador (+6 percentage points), British Columbia (+3 points), and Alberta (+3). They decreased in the Northwest Territories and Yukon (-9 percentage points in both cases).

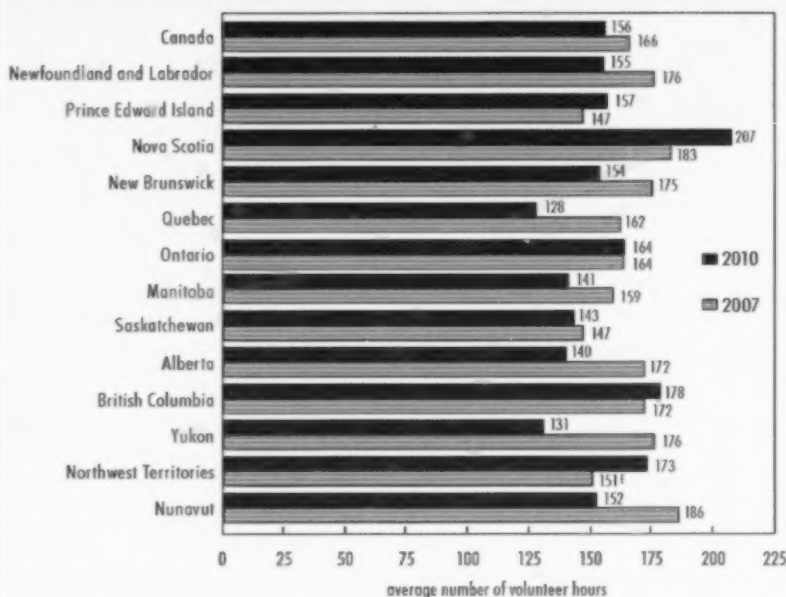
These differences in provincial and territorial rates of volunteering are more complex than they initially appear. Rates of volunteering are consistently higher in rural and less urban regions,¹⁴ so one might expect provinces with fewer large urban areas to generally have higher volunteer rates. Also, findings from earlier surveys show that regional gaps in volunteer rates narrow when informal volunteering (direct help to individuals) is included in the estimate, which suggests that "volunteer culture" can vary considerably between communities.¹⁵

On average, volunteers in most provinces and territories dedicated from 140 to 178 hours to volunteer work in 2010; the exceptions were Nova Scotia (207 hours), Quebec (128 hours) and Yukon (131 hours). Compared with 2007, only Quebec (-34 hours) and Yukon (-45 hours) experienced significant shifts in the average number of volunteer hours given to non-profit and charitable organizations (Chart 7).

The most common activities are fundraising and organizing events

Raising money and putting on events are the two most common activities in which volunteers are engaged. In 2010, 45% of volunteers were involved in fundraising and almost as many participated in organizing or supervising events (44%) (Chart 8). About one-third sat on a committee or board (33%) or provided teaching, educating or mentoring (30%). About one-quarter of volunteers reported

Chart 7 Average volunteer hours by province or territory, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010

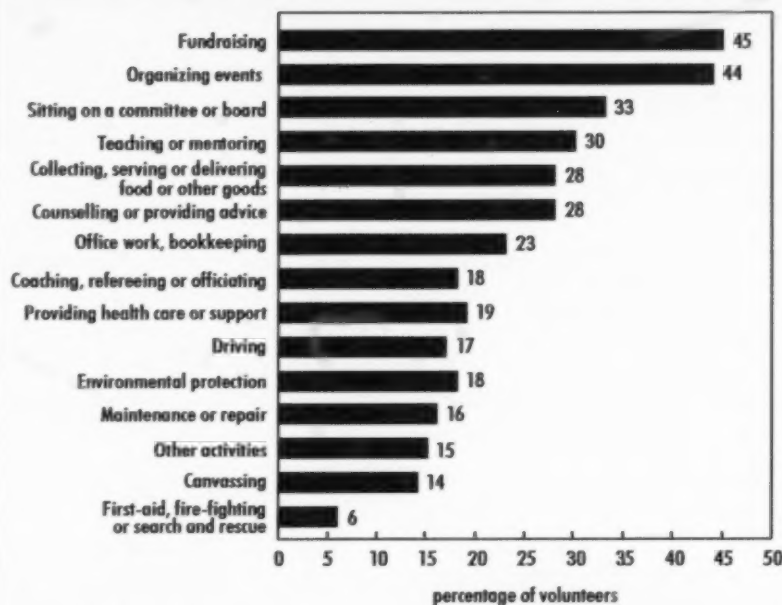


Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

collecting, serving or delivering food (28%), counselling or providing advice (28%), and doing office work (23%). Coaching, refereeing or officiating was reported by 18% of volunteers, while the smallest proportion, 6%, were involved in first aid, firefighting or search and rescue. These figures are basically unchanged from 2007.

With so many volunteers working on events, it is not surprising that organizing or supervising events took up 15% of the hours that volunteers expended on their main organization in 2010 (Chart 9). Twelve percent of hours were dedicated to teaching, educating or mentoring, which are also time-consuming tasks. One-tenth of total hours were spent sitting on a committee or board (10%) and on fundraising (9%). Office work, as well as coaching, refereeing or officiating accounted for 8% of hours, while 2% were devoted to first aid, firefighting or search and rescue. These proportions are essentially the same as those recorded in 2007.

Chart 8 Participation rate by type of volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



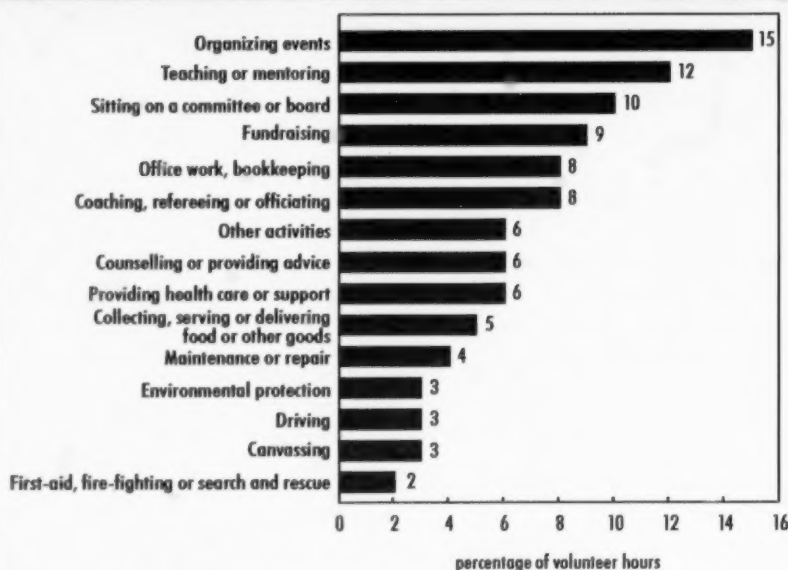
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Self-motivated volunteers give more hours on average

In 2010, about one-half (51%) of volunteers had been asked by someone to volunteer, while just over 4 in 10 volunteers (43%) said that they had approached an organization on their own to seek volunteer opportunities. These self-motivated volunteers had acted because they had seen an advertisement such as a poster or newspaper ad for the organization (14%), learned about it on the Internet (5%), heard or seen a public appeal on television or radio (4%), or were referred by another agency. All these figures are the same as those reported for 2007, with the exception of information derived from the Internet (which rose from 3% to 5%).

Volunteers who were motivated enough to approach their main organization on their own initiative gave more hours, on average, than other volunteers—142 versus 97 hours. And although these volunteers constituted less than one-

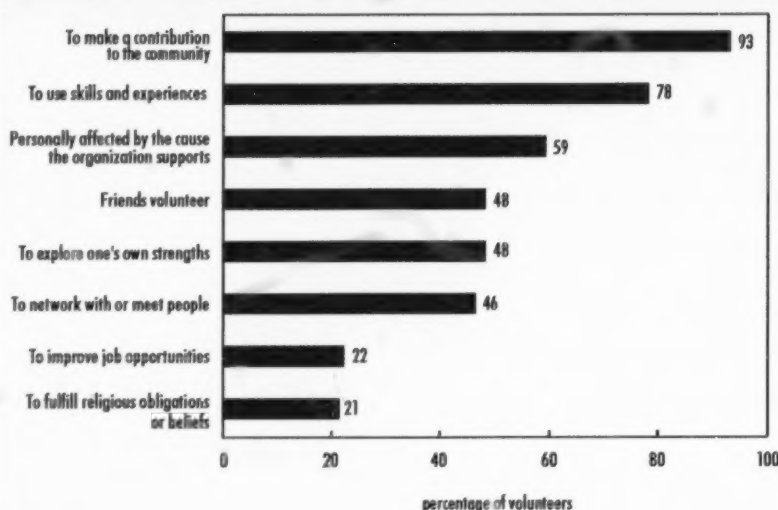
Chart 9 Distribution of annual volunteer hours,¹ by type of volunteer activity, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



1. Hours spent on activities for the organization to which the volunteer gave the most time (main organization).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Chart 10 Reasons for volunteering,¹ volunteers aged 15 years and over, 2010



1. Reasons for volunteering with the organization to which the volunteer gave the most hours (main organization).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

half of volunteers, they accounted for one-half (50%) of the hours recorded for the main organization in 2010.

The vast majority of volunteers want to contribute to their community

People volunteer for a non-profit or charitable organization for a wide variety of reasons, from the altruistic (e.g. to help others) to the self-interested (e.g. to learn new skills). But transforming the will to volunteer into hours of work may not be easy. A person may face barriers to participating such as competing demands on their time or not knowing where to start. The CSGVP asked a series of questions to learn why people volunteer and why some volunteer more than others.

People volunteer their time to an organization because they want to support their community. In 2010, almost all (93%) volunteers said that making a contribution to the community was a key motivating factor in their decision (Chart 10). Slightly more than three-quarters (78%) said they wanted to make good use of their skills and experiences; over one-half (59%) said that they had been personally affected by the cause the organization represented or supported. Almost one-half had become volunteers because they had friends who were involved (48%), they wanted to learn what their strengths were (48%), or they wanted to network with others or meet new people (46%). Less than one-quarter said they wanted to improve the job opportunities available to them (22%) or undertook volunteer work to meet religious obligations or beliefs (21%). These proportions were unchanged from 2007.

About two-thirds of volunteers benefit from improved interpersonal skills

Although most volunteers get involved with a charitable or non-profit organization for altruistic reasons, most also believe that they receive substantial benefits

themselves. Many stated that their volunteer activities had given them a chance to develop new skills; for example, about two-thirds (64%) said their interpersonal skills had improved (Chart 11). Volunteers also thought their volunteer experience had given them better skills in communications (44%), organizing (39%), fundraising (33%) and technical or office work (27%). One-third (34%) also reported that working as a volunteer had increased their knowledge of such subjects as health, women's or political issues, criminal justice or the environment.

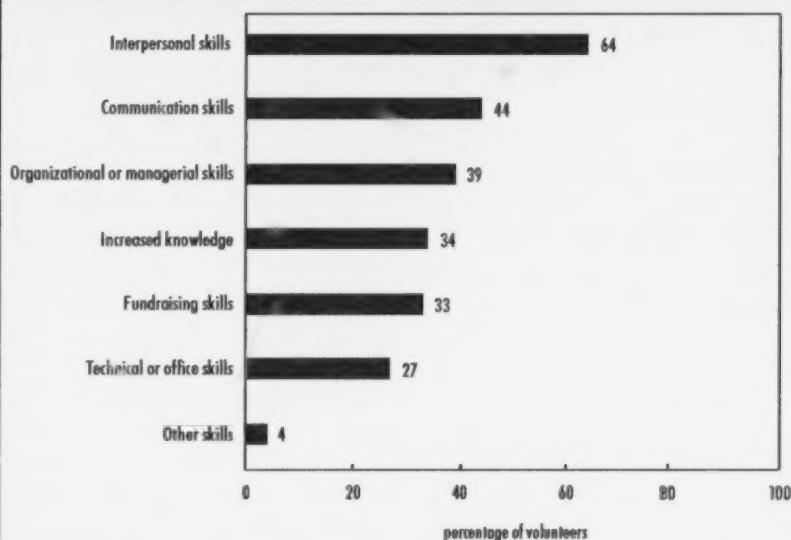
Lack of time is the biggest barrier to volunteering

Previous research shows that when most people are deciding whether or not to volunteer, they consider that the costs outweigh the benefits even among those who are already volunteers.¹⁶ Thus, the reasons why people do not volunteer (or do not volunteer more) present a considerable challenge to non-profit and charitable organizations that need to recruit more unpaid help.

Without question, lack of time is the biggest barrier to people becoming involved in volunteering. About two-thirds of Canadians aged 15 and over who had not done any formal volunteering in 2010 said that their key reasons were not having enough time (67%) and the inability to make a long-term commitment (62%) (Chart 12). This does not mean people who don't volunteer don't value the work done by non-profit and charitable organizations; in fact, over one-half (52%) of this group said they preferred to give dollars instead of hours.

Interestingly, 45% of non-volunteers had not become involved because no one had asked them to, which suggests they might sign up to volunteer if they were approached the right way. On the other hand, about one-quarter (27%) had no interest in volunteering and 7% had not been satisfied with an earlier experience

Chart 11 Skills acquired through volunteering, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Required community participation

Some Canadians contribute to an organization or cause because they are required to do unpaid charitable work by an authority, such as their school, their employer, the organization to which they belong, or the courts. Just over 7% of volunteers aged 15 and over reported that they had performed this type of required community service in 2010.¹ They contributed 98 million hours, equivalent to more than 6% of the total volunteer hours devoted to non-profit or charitable organizations. This proportion was about the same as in 2007.

About one-half of these individuals (47%) were required to do their service by the organization itself (for example, a non-profit daycare or housing co-op that expects its members to perform certain tasks). A little less than one-third (31%) had been required to contribute to an organization by their school, 8% by their employer and 14% by some other authority (e.g. the courts). People who were required to volunteer generally worked the same average number of hours as other volunteers, 105 hours compared with 117 hours. Young people aged 15 to 24 were most likely to report doing required volunteering (13%); for over two-thirds of them (69%), it was mandated by their school. Canadians with lower levels of education and lower household incomes were also more likely to report doing required service.

1. Data on required volunteer participation were collected only for volunteers' main organization.

of volunteering. These percentages are no different than those recorded in 2007.¹⁷

Not surprisingly, people who were already volunteering identified the same barriers to participation as did non-volunteers. Almost three-quarters (74%) of volunteers said they did not devote more hours to the organization because they just did not have the time (Chart 13). Over one-half (54%) said they simply could not commit long-term to working more hours; 39% said they had already given enough time to volunteering.

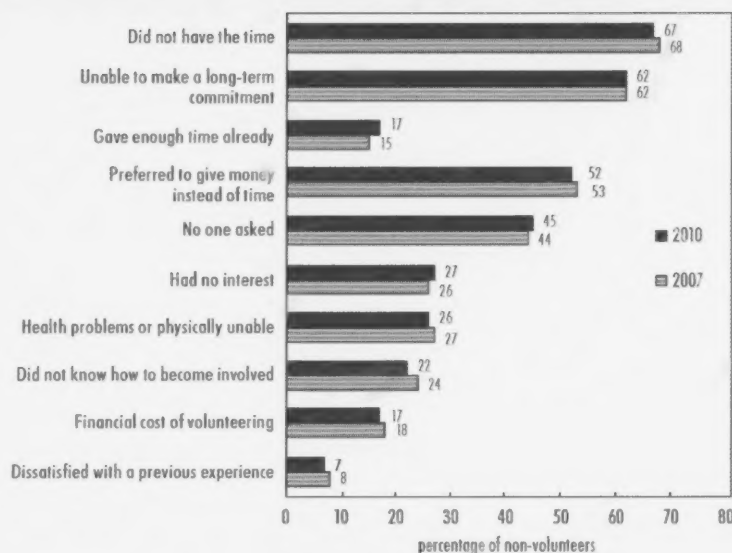
Less than one-third of volunteers said they preferred to give money rather than more time or that they had not given more hours because no one had asked (30% in both cases). Less common reasons for not offering to work more hours included no interest, health or physical problems, not knowing how to get involved, the financial cost of volunteering and having had a bad experience with volunteering on a previous occasion. These percentages are effectively the same as those recorded in 2007.

Young Canadians have the highest probability of volunteering

Young Canadians aged 15 to 24 were more likely to volunteer than Canadians in most other age groups, at 58% (Table 2). Within this age group, teenagers 15 to 19 (66%) had a considerably higher rate of volunteering than young adults 20 to 24 (48%), about the same as the rates recorded in 2007. Young volunteers aged 15 to 19 did an average of 115 hours of volunteer work in 2010, compared with 159 for those aged 20 to 24.

Fifteen- to 19-year-old Canadians had higher rates of volunteer participation in all types of organizations than their 20- to 24-year old counterparts. As might be expected, the highest participation rate for teens was in education and research organizations, at 25%, compared with 5% for 20- to 24-year-

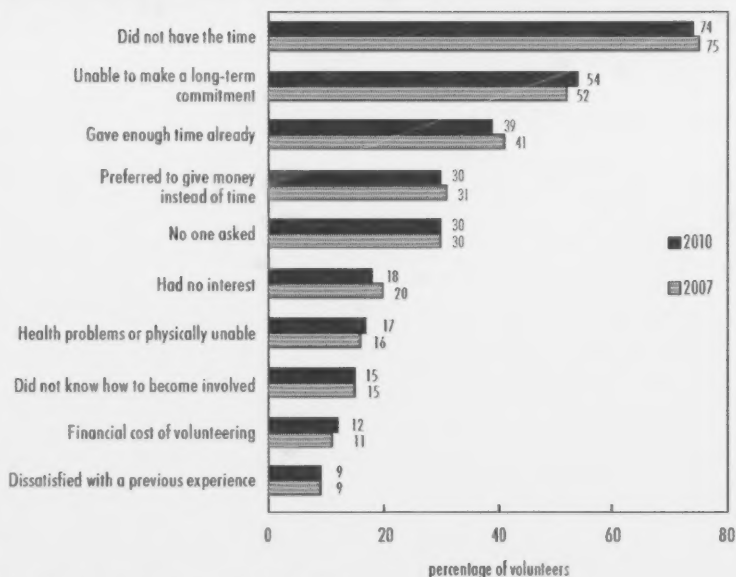
Chart 12 Reasons for not volunteering, non-volunteers aged 15 and over,¹ 2007 and 2010



1. Includes people who had not volunteered in the 12 months preceding the survey but who may have volunteered before that period.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

Chart 13 Reasons for not volunteering more, volunteers aged 15 and over,¹ 2007 and 2010



1. Excludes those volunteering more than 1,500 hours.

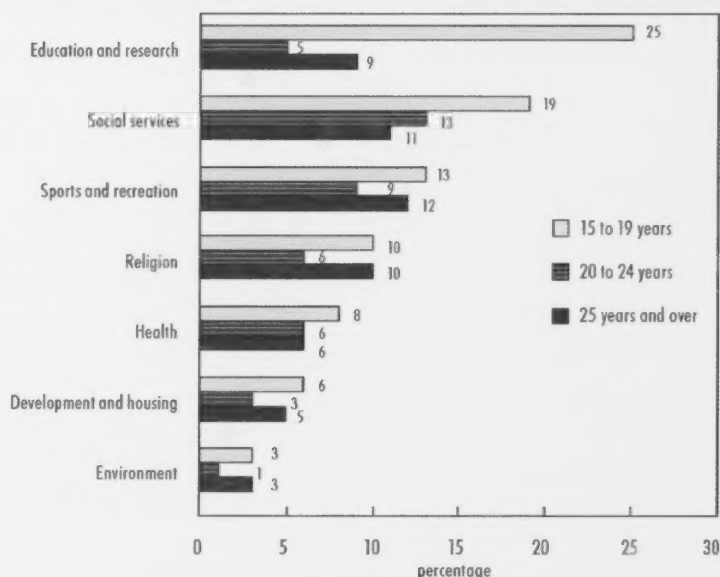
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

olds (it was 9% for adults aged 25 and over) (Chart 14). Nineteen percent of teens did volunteer work for organizations involved in social services (versus 13% for those aged 20 to 24), and 13% volunteered for organizations engaged in sports and recreation. Ten percent of 15- to 19-year-olds worked for religious organizations, compared with 6% of 20- to 24-year-olds.

As discussed earlier, community service is a prerequisite for high school graduation in some school districts, so the high rates observed for teenagers should be interpreted with some caution. Required community service was intended to inculcate a "habit of volunteering" that teens would carry into adulthood; however, at least one study of Ontario students showed that these programs have not appreciably changed teens' attitudes to volunteering or their level of civic engagement.¹⁸ On the other hand, it should be noted that, in 2010, just over one-half (53%) of teen volunteers contributed more than 40 hours to non-profit and charitable organizations. Only time will tell how many of the current generation of teenagers will volunteer when they reach adulthood.

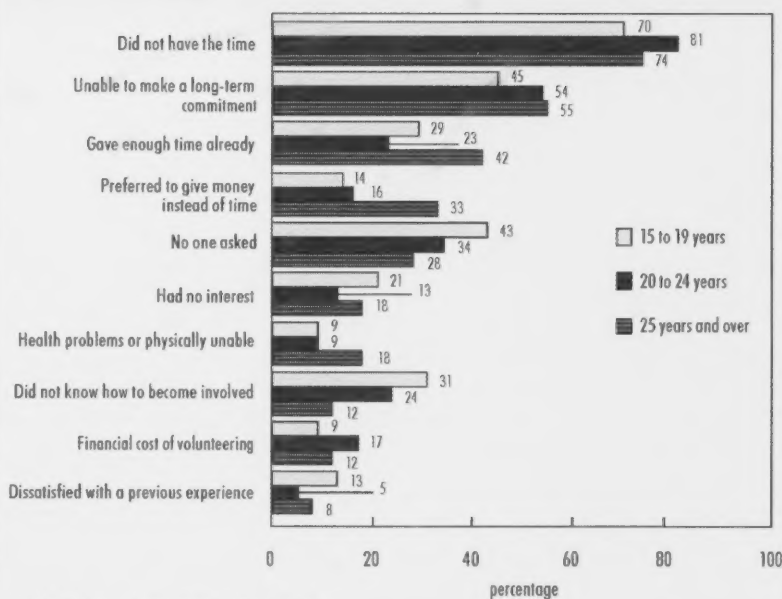
The barriers to volunteering faced by young people are really no different than those encountered by other volunteers. Over two-thirds of 15- to 19-year-old (70%) and over three-quarters of 20- to 24-year-old (81%) volunteers said they did not dedicate more hours because they did not have enough time (Chart 15). Far fewer—45% of 15- to 19-year-olds and 54% of 20- to 24-year-olds—said they did not feel they could make a long-term commitment to volunteering. These percentages are very similar to those for volunteers aged 25 and over, which is not surprising considering many teens have a 50-hour "work-week"¹⁹ that is just as long as that of working-age adults.²⁰ However, teens and young adults were more likely than older Canadians to say no one had asked them to do more or they did not know

Chart 14 Volunteer rate, by age group and selected organization type, population aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Chart 15 Barriers to volunteering more, by age group, volunteers aged 15 and over,¹ 2010



1. Excludes those volunteering more than 1,500 hours.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

how to get involved. Teens were about three times more likely than young adults to say that a bad experience in the past had discouraged them from doing more volunteer work (13% of those aged 15 to 19 versus 5% of those aged 20 to 24).

More than 8 in 10 Canadians help others directly (informal volunteering)

Organizations are not the only recipients of Canadians' charitable time and energy. In fact, compared with the proportion engaged in formal volunteering, almost twice as many Canadians aged 15 and over provide informal direct help to people living outside the household, such as relatives, friends and neighbours. In 2010, 83% of Canadians assisted someone who needed help at least once that year, the same proportion as in 2007.

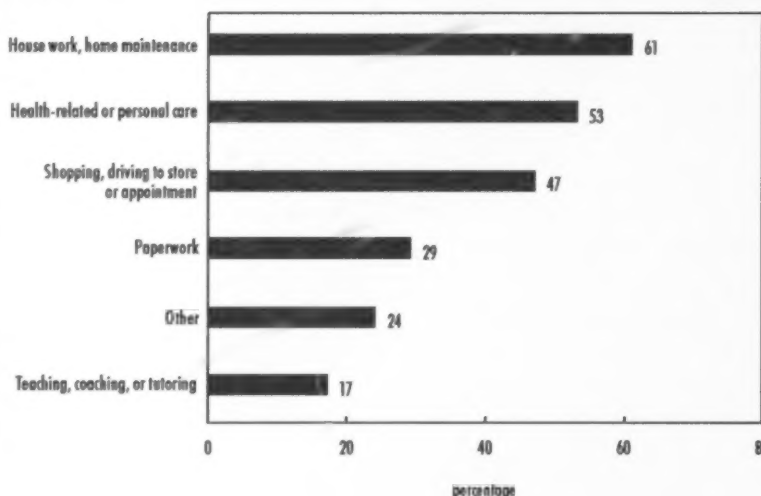
Most of the help given directly (informal volunteering) was assistance with everyday kinds of activities (Chart 16):

- 61% provided housework, yard work, and household maintenance;
- 53% gave health-related or personal care, such as emotional support, advice and counselling, and unpaid babysitting;
- 47% helped someone to run errands, get to appointments or go shopping;
- 29% provided assistance with paperwork, such as filing taxes, banking and completing forms;
- 17% offered unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring or reading;
- 24% provided direct help with other types of activities of daily living.

These figures are virtually the same as those recorded in 2007.

An important question to ask people who provide direct help is the frequency with which they do this, so as to measure the intensity of this kind of unpaid work. The most intense informal volunteering is performed by people who teach or coach others. In 2010, among people who directly helped others

Chart 16 Rate of helping others directly, by type of activity, population aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

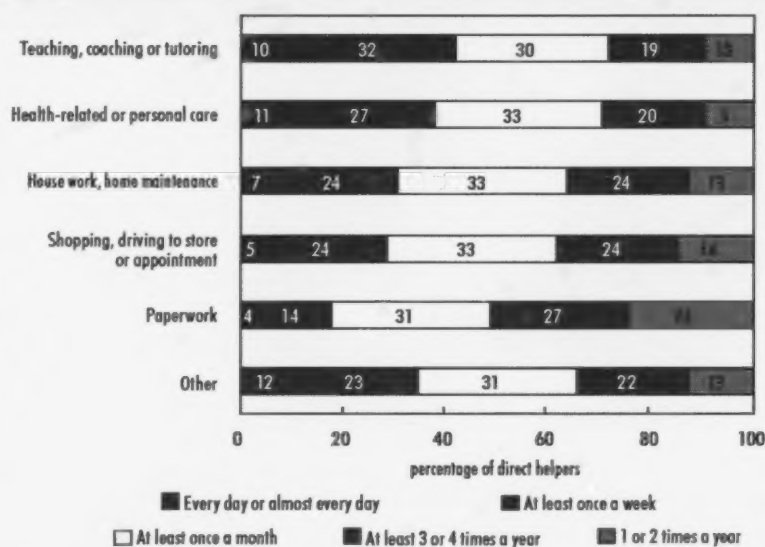
daily or weekly, 42% taught, coached or mentored; 38% provided health-related and personal care; 29% helped with shopping or appointments and 31% with housework or household maintenance (Chart 17).

The type of people who provide direct help to friends, neighbours and colleagues are very similar to formal volunteers. This would be expected, since people who are active volunteers tend to be involved in many aspects of civic engagement. In 2010, informal volunteers were more likely to be better-educated than people who were not giving direct help (88% of university graduates compared with 73% of people without high school graduation), to be employed (87% of those with jobs versus 79% of those not in the labour force), to have higher household income (87% of those with \$100,000 or more compared with 75% of those with less than \$20,000), and to have children under 18 living at home (Table 4).

But also, as previously shown, people in groups with high rates of volunteering actually spend less time helping, and the same is true of informal volunteers. For example, although people with less than high school completion had lower rates of direct helping, 55% of those who did help provided assistance daily or weekly, compared with 41% of informal volunteers who had a university degree. Similarly, 54% of informal volunteers who were not in the labour force gave direct help at least once a week, versus 45% of those who had a job. And 58% of lower-income informal volunteers (reporting income under \$20,000) helped at least once a week, versus 43% of those with incomes over \$100,000 (Table 4).

The rate of informal volunteering was quite steady across age groups; it ranged from 82% to 87% until age 64, and then dropped to 71% for seniors. Generally speaking, the frequency of informal volunteering was also similar across most age

Chart 17 Frequency of helping others directly, by type of activity, direct helpers aged 15 and over, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

groups. About 13% to 16% of direct helpers in all age groups provided help every day or almost every day, with the exception of young people aged 15 to 24 (23%). Over one-third of informal volunteers in most age groups helped at least once a week, as did smaller proportions of adults aged 35 to 44 (26%).

Compared with married, single or divorced people (83% to 84%), people who were widowed (70%) were considerably less likely to volunteer informally, but this reflects the fact that they tend to be older adults and health problems may limit their ability to help. And while more than one-half of single (56%) and divorced (51%) informal volunteers provided help daily or weekly, less than one-half (44%) of those living in couples gave help that frequently (Table 4).

Table 4 Rate and frequency of helping others directly, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2010

	Rate of helping others directly	Frequency of helping others directly			
		Daily or almost daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	A few times a year
		percentage			
Total	83	16	32	29	22
Age group					
15 to 24 years †	87	23	35	26	16
25 to 34 years	87	15*	35	30	21
35 to 44 years	86	13*	26*	33*	29*
45 to 54 years	82*	14*	31	30	25*
55 to 64 years	82*	16*	35	29	19
65 years and over	71*	14*	34	29	23*
65 to 74 years	76*	16*	33	29	23*
75 years and over	64*	12*	36	29	23*
Sex					
Men †	82	13	31	31	25
Women	83	18*	34*	28*	20*

Table 4 Rate and frequency of helping others directly, by personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2010 (continued)

	Rate of helping others directly	Frequency of helping others directly			
		Daily or almost daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	A few times a year
percentage					
Marital status					
Married or common law †	83	13	31	31	25
Single, never married	84	21*	35*	26*	18*
Separated or divorced	83	17*	34	30	18*
Widow or widower	70*	17	41*	25*	17*
Level of education					
Less than high school diploma †	73	19	36	26	19
Graduated from high school	80*	19	37	24	20
Some postsecondary	88*	18	33	27	22
Postsecondary diploma or certificate	86*	15*	32	31*	22
University degree	88*	11*	30*	33*	27*
Labour force status					
Employed †	87	14	31	30	24
Unemployed	86	19 [†]	29 [†]	33 [†]	20 [†]
Not in the labour force	79*	19*	35*	27*	19*
Household income					
Less than \$20,000 †	75	21	37	23	18
\$20,000 to \$39,999	76	18	33	27	22
\$40,000 to \$59,999	81*	18	32*	29*	21
\$60,000 to \$79,999	86*	16*	31*	33*	20
\$80,000 to \$99,999	87*	14*	35	27	24*
\$100,000 and over	87*	12*	31*	31*	25*
\$100,000 to \$119,999	89*	12*	31*	32*	24*
\$120,000 and over	85*	13*	31*	31*	25*
Presence of children in household¹					
No children in household †	81	16	33	29	22
Pre-school aged children only	88*	13	30	31	27*
Both pre-school and school-aged children	87*	19	28*	31	22
School-aged children only	84*	16	32	29	23
Religious attendance					
Attends services weekly †	85	17	35	29	19
Does not attend services weekly	83	15	32	30	23*

† reference group

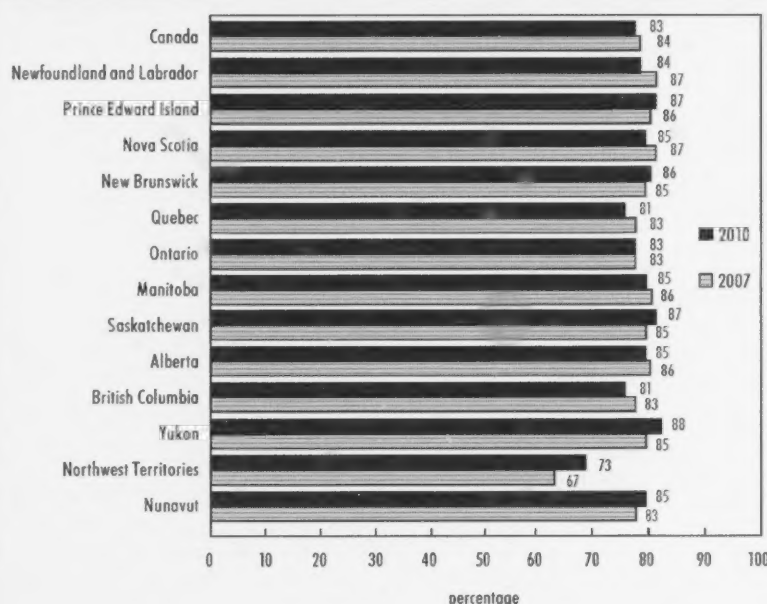
* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from reference group

1. "Pre-school aged" is defined as ages 0 to 5, while "school aged" is defined as ages 6 to 17. "Both pre-school and school aged children" indicates the presence in the household of at least one child from each age range (i.e., at least one child aged 0 to 5 and at least one child aged 6 to 17).

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Chart 18 Rate of helping others directly, by province or territory, population aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010



Source : Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

In 2010, more than 8 in 10 adults in all provinces and territories had given direct help to family, friends or neighbours (Chart 18). The exception was the Northwest Territories, in which less than three-quarters of the population aged 15 and over (73%) did any informal volunteer work. The Northwest Territories also had the lowest rate for providing direct help in 2007.

Summary

In 2010, about 1 in 2 Canadians aged 15 and over donated their time, energy and skills to charities and non-profit organizations. The approximately 2 billion volunteer hours they contributed is equivalent to more than 1 million full-time jobs.

A small proportion of these volunteers do most of the work. In fact, 10 % of volunteers accounted for 53% of all the volunteer hours given in 2010. Each volunteer in this

group dedicated the equivalent of 10 or more weeks in a full-time job, about the same as in 2007

The bulk of total volunteer hours (66%) were given to five types of non-profit and charitable organizations: those involved in sports and recreation had the largest share (19% of total hours), followed by social services (18%), religion (15%) education and research (9%) and health (5%).

Younger Canadians are more likely to volunteer than older Canadians. Well over one-half (58%) of Canadians aged 15 to 24 volunteered in 2010 but they devoted fewer hours than older Canadians. Among young people, teenagers were more likely than young adults to volunteer.

Religion plays an important role in formal volunteering: 65% of Canadians who attended weekly religious services did volunteering, compared with 44% of those who did

not attend weekly or at all. Volunteers who were frequent religious attendees dedicated about 40% more hours on average than other volunteers.

Education level and income also play a role. In 2010 for example, 58% of adults with a university degree reported doing volunteer work, compared with 37% of those without high school graduation. While 58% of people with household incomes of \$120,000 or more reported volunteering, 33% of those with incomes under \$20,000 did so. However, people in the lower income group worked a higher average number of volunteer hours than those in the high income group.

Having children at home is associated with the likelihood of volunteering. In 2010, 56% to 59% parents with school-age children at home were volunteers, compared with 41% of people without any children at home.

Among the provinces and territories, Saskatchewan had the highest rate of formal volunteering in non-profit organizations (58%), while the lowest rates were in Quebec and the Northwest Territories (both at 37%).

The vast majority of volunteers are motivated by their desire to contribute to their community: 93% gave this reason in 2010. Additionally, more than three-quarters (78%) wanted to make good use of their skills and experience; over one-half (59%) said that they had been personally affected by the cause the organization supported; and 48% volunteered because they had friends who were involved.

Lack of time is the most commonly reported barrier to volunteering, the key reason given by 67% of people who had not formally volunteered in 2010. Another 45% had not become involved because no one had asked them to, suggesting that they might sign up to volunteer if they were approached the right way.

Compared with the number of Canadians who volunteer formally, about twice as many provide direct help to family, friends and neighbours. Four in five Canadians, or 83%, were "informal" volunteers in 2010, mostly helping others with day-to-day activities such as household tasks, health-related or personal care, or errands.



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